Mr. Foote *in the Character of* Mrs. Cole.

1474 b 26

THE MINOR,

A COMEDY.

Written by Mr. FOOTE.

As it is Acted at the

THEATRE-ROYAL IN DRURY-LANE.

Tantum Religio potuit Suadere Malorum.

The FIFTH EDITION.

LONDON:

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MDCCLXI.

[Price One Shilling and Sixpence.]

Persons in the Introduction.

Foote.	
Canker,	Mr. Johnson.
Smart,	Mr. Fox.
Pearse,	Mr. Watkins.

In the COMEDY.

Sir William Wealthy,	Mr. Badely.
Mr. Richard Wealthy,	Mr. Burton.
Sir George Wealthy,	Mr. Holland.
Shift,	Mr. Foote.
Loader,	Mr. Bransby.
Dick,	Mr. Vaughan.
Transfer,	Mr. Blakes.
Smirk,	Mr. Foote.
The Baron, assum'd,	Mr. Badely.
Mrs. Cole,	Mr. Foote.
Lucy,	Miss Pritchard.

TO HIS GRACE

WILLIAM Duke of DEVONSHIRE,

Lord Chamberlain of his Majeſty's Houſhold.

MY LORD,

THE MINOR, who is indebted for his appearance on the ſtage, to your grace's indulgence, begs leave to deſire your further protection, at his entering into the world.

Though the allegiance due from the whole dramatic people to your grace's ſtation, might place this addreſs in the light of a natural tribute; yet, my lord, I ſhould not have taken that liberty with the duke of Devonſhire, if I could not, at the ſame time, plead ſome little utility in the deſign of my piece; and add, that the public approbation has ſtamped a value on the execution.

The law, which threw the ſtage under the abſolute government of a lord chamberlain, could not fail to fill the minds of all the objects of that power, with very gloomy apprehenſions; they found themſelves (through their own licentiouſneſs, it muſt be confeſs'd) in a more precarious dependent ſtate, than any other of his majeſty's ſubjects. But when their direction was lodged in the hands of a nobleman, whoſe anceſtors had ſo ſucceſsfully ſtruggled for national liberty, they ceaſed to fear for their own. It was not from a patron of the liberal arts, they were to expect an oppreſſor; it was not from the friend of freedom, and of man, they were to dread partial monopolies, or the eſtabliſhment of petty tyrannies.

Their warmeſt wiſhes are accompliſhed; none of their rights have been invaded, except, what without the firſt poetic authority, I ſhould not venture to call a right, the Jus Nocendi.

Your tenderneſs, my lord, for all the followers of the Muſes, has been in no inſtance more conſpicuous, than in your late favour to me, the meaneſt of their train; your grace has thrown open (for thoſe who are deny'd admittance into the palaces of Parnaſſus) a cottage on its borders, where the unhappy migrants may be, if not magnificently, at leaſt, hoſpitably entertained.

I ſhall detain your grace no longer, than juſt to eccho the public voice, that, for the honour, progreſs, and perfection of letters, your grace may long continue their candid CENSOR, who have always been their generous protector.

I have the honour, my lord, to be, with the greateſt reſpect, and gratitude,

Your grace's moſt dutiful,

Moſt oblig'd,

And obedient ſervant,

Elleſtree,
July 8, 1760.

SAMUEL FOOTE.

THE

MINOR.

INTRODUCTION.

Enter CANKER *and* SMART.

SMART.

BUT are you ſure he has leave?

CANKER.

Certain.

SMART.

I'm damn'd glad on't. For now we ſhall have a laugh, either with him or at him, it does not ſignify which.

CANKER.

Not a farthing.

SMART.

SMART.

D'you know his ſcheme?

CANKER.

Not I. But is not the door of the little theatre open?

SMART.

Yes. Who is that fellow that ſeems to ſtand centry there?

CANKER.

By his tatter'd garb, and meagre viſage, he muſt be one of the troop.

SMART.

I'll call him. Holo, Mr. ——

Enter PEARSE.

What, is there any thing going on over the way?

PEARSE.

A rehearſal.

SMART.

Of what?

PEARSE.

A new piece.

SMART.

Foote's?

PEARSE.

Yes.

CANKER.

Is he there?

PEARSE.

He is.

SMART.

Zouns, let's go and ſee what he is about.

CAN-

CANKER.

With all my Heart.

SMART.

Come along then. [*Exeunt.*

Enter FOOTE *and an* ACTOR.

FOOTE.

Sir, this will never do, you muſt get rid of your high notes, and country cant. Oh, 'tis the true ſtroling.

Enter SMART *and* CANKER.

SMART.

Ha, ha, ha, what, hard at it, my boy!—Here's your old friend Canker and I come for a peep. Well, and hey, what is your plan?

FOOTE.

Plan?

SMART.

Ay, what are your characters? Give us your groupe; how is your cloth fill'd?

FOOTE.

Characters!

SMART.

Ay.—Come, come, communicate. What, man, we will lend thee a lift. I have a damn'd fine original for thee, an aunt of my own, juſt come from the north, with the true Newcaſtle bur in her throat; and a noſe and a chin.—I am afraid ſhe is not well enough known: But I have a remedy for that. I'll bring her the firſt night of your piece, place her in a conſpicuous ſtation, and whiſper the ſecret to the

whole houſe. That will be damn'd fine, won't it?

FOOTE.

Oh, delicious!

SMART.

But don't name me. For if ſhe ſmokes me, for the author, I ſhall be daſh'd out of her codicil in a hurry.

FOOTE.

Oh, never fear me. But I ſhou'd think your uncle Tom a better character.

SMART.

What, the politician?

FOOTE.

Ay; that every day, after dinner, as ſoon as the cloth is remov'd, fights the battle of Minden, batters the French with cherry-ſtones, and purſues 'em to the banks of the Rhine, in a ſtream of ſpilt port.

SMART.

Oh, damn it, he'll do.

FOOTE.

Or what ſay you to your father-in-law, Sir Timothy? Who, tho' as broken-winded as a Hounſlow poſt horſe, is eternally chaunting Venetian ballads. Kata tore cara higlia.

SMART.

Admirable! by heavens! —— Have you got 'em?

FOOTE.

No.

SMART.

Then in with 'em, my boy.

FOOTE.

Not one.

SMART.

Pry'thee why not?

FOOTE.

Why look'ee, Smart, tho' you are, in the language of the world, my friend, yet there is one thing you, I am ſure, love better than any body.

SMART.

What's that?

FOOTE.

Miſchief.

SMART.

No, pr'ythee——

SMART.

How now, am I ſure that you, who ſo readily give up your relations, may not have ſome deſign upon me.

SMART.

I don't underſtand you.

FOOTE.

Why, as ſoon as my characters begin to circulate a little ſucceſsfully, my mouth is ſtopp'd in a minute, by the clamour of your relations, ——Oh, damme,—'tis a ſhame,—it ſhou'd not be,——people of diſtinction brought upon the ſtage.——And ſo out of compliment to your couſins, I am to be beggar'd, for treating the public with the follies of your family, at your own requeſt.

SMART.

How can you think I wou'd be ſuch a dog. What the devil, then, are we to have nothing perſonal? Give us the actors however.

FOOTE.

Oh, that's ſtale. Beſides, I think they have, of all men, the beſt right to complain.

SMART.

How ſo?

FOOTE.

Becauſe, by rendering them ridiculous in their profeſſion, you, at the ſame time, injure their pockets. Now, as to the other gentry, they have providentially ſomething beſides their underſtanding to rely on; and the only injury they can receive is, that the whole town is then diverted, with what before, was only the amuſement of private parties.

CANKER.

Give us then a national portrait; a Scotchman or an Iriſhman.

FOOTE.

If you mean merely the dialect of the two countries, I can't think it either a ſubject of ſatyr or humour; it is an accidental unhappineſs, for which a man is no more accountable, than the colour of his hair. Now affectation I take to be the true comic Object. If, indeed, a north Briton, ſtruck with a ſcheme of reformation, ſhould advance from the banks of the Tweed, to teach the Engliſh the true pronunciation of their own language, he would, I think, merit your laughter: nor would a Dublin mechanic, who, from heading the Liberty boys in a ſkirmiſh on Ormond Quay, ſhould think he had a right to preſcribe military laws

to

to the firſt commander in Europe, be a leſs ridiculous object.

SMART.

Are there ſuch?

FOOTE.

If you mean that the blunders of a few peaſants, or the partial principles of a ſingle ſcoundrel, are to ſtand as characteriſtical marks of a whole country; your pride may produce a laugh, but, believe me, it is at the expence of your underſtanding.

CANKER.

Heydey, what a ſyſtem is here! Laws for laughing! And pray, ſage Sir, inſtruct us when we may laugh with propriety.

FOOTE.

At an old beau, a ſuperannuated beauty, a military coward, a ſtuttering orator, or a gouty dancer. In ſhort, whoever affects to be what he is not, or ſtrives to be what he cannot, is an object worthy the poet's pen, and your mirth.

SMART.

Pſha, I don't know what you mean by your is nots, and cannots——damn'd abſtruſe jargon. Ha, Canker.

CANKER.

Well, but if you will not give us perſons, let us have things. Treat us with a modern amour, and a ſtate intrigue, or a——

FOOTE.

And ſo amuſe the public ear, at the expence of private peace. You muſt excuſe me.

CAN-

CANKER.

And with theſe principles, you expect to thrive on this ſpot?

SMART.

No, no, it won't do. I tell thee the plain roaſt and boil'd of the theatres, will never do at this table. We muſt have high ſeaſon'd ragoûts, and rich ſauces.

FOOTE.

Why, perhaps, by way of deſert, I may produce ſomething that may hit your palate.

SMART.

Your bill of Fare.

FOOTE.

What think you of one of thoſe itinerant field Orators, who, tho' at declar'd enmity with common ſenſe, have the addreſs to poiſon the principles, and, and at the ſame time pick the pockets of half our induſtrious fellow-ſubjects.

CANKER.

Have a care. Dangerous ground. Ludere cum ſacris, you know.

FOOTE.

Now I look upon it in a different manner. I conſider theſe gentlemen in the light of public performers, like myſelf; and whether we exhibit at Tottenham-court, or the Hay-market, our purpoſe is the ſame, and the place is immaterial.

CANKER.

Why, indeed if it be conſidered——

FOOTE.

FOOTE.

Nay, more, I muſt beg leave to aſſert, that ridicule is the only antidote againſt this pernicious poiſon. This is a madneſs that argument can never cure: and ſhould a little wholeſome ſeverity be apply'd, perſecution would be the immediate cry: where then can we have recourſe, but to the comic muſe; perhaps, the archneſs and ſeverity of her ſmile, may redreſs an evil, that the laws cannot reach, or reaſon reclaim.

CANKER.

Why, if it does not cure thoſe already diſtemper'd, it may be a means to ſtop the infection.

SMART.

But how is your ſcheme conducted?

FOOTE.

Of that you may judge. We are juſt going upon a repetition of the piece. I ſhould be glad to have your opinion.

SMART.

We will give it you.

FOOTE.

One indulgence: As you are Engliſhmen, I think, I need not beg, that as from neceſſity moſt of my performers are new, you will allow for their inexperience, and encourage their timidity.

SMART.

But reaſonable.

FOOTE.

Come then, prompter begin.

PEARSE.

Lord, ſir, we are all at a ſtand.

FOOTE.

What's the matter?

PEARSE.

Mrs. O-Shochneſy has return'd the part of the bawd; ſhe ſays ſhe is a gentlewoman, and it would be a reflection on her family to do any ſuch thing.

FOOTE.

Indeed!

PEARSE.

If it had been only a whore, ſays ſhe, I ſhould not have minded it; becauſe no lady need be aſham'd of doing that.

FOOTE.

Well, there is no help for it; but theſe gentlemen muſt not be diſappointed. Well, I'll do the character myſelf.

ACT I.

Sir WILLIAM WEALTHY, *and Mr.* RICHARD WEALTHY.

Sir WILLIAM.

COME, come, brother, I know the world. People, who have their attention eternally fix'd upon one object, can't help being a little narrow in their notions.

R. WEALTHY.

A ſagacious remark that, and highly probable, that we merchants, who maintain a conſtant correſpondence with the four quarters of the world, ſhould know leſs of it than you faſhionable fellows, whoſe whole experience is bounded by Weſtminſter bridge.

Sir WILLIAM.

Nay, brother, as a proof that I am not blind to the benefit of travelling, George, you know, has been in Germany theſe four years.

R. WEALTHY.

Where he is well grounded in gaming and gluttony; France has furniſhed him with fawning and flattery; Italy equip'd him with capriols and cantatas: and thus accompliſh'd, my young gentleman is return'd with a cargo of whores, cooks, valets de chambre', and fiddleſticks, a moſt valuable member of the Britiſh commonwealth.

Sir WILLIAM.

You diſlike then my ſyſtem of education.

R. WEALTAY.

Moſt ſincerely.

Sir WILLIAM.

The whole?

R. WEALTHY.

Every particular.

Sir WILLIAM.

The early part, I ſhould imagine, might merit your approbation.

R. WEALTHY.

Leaſt of all. What, I ſuppoſe, becauſe he has run the gauntlet thro' a public ſchool, where, at ſixteen, he had practis'd more vices than he would otherwiſe have heard of at ſixty.

Sir WILLIAM.

Ha, ha, prejudice!

R. WEALTHY.

Then, indeed, you remov'd him to the univerſity; where, leſt his morals ſhould be mended, and his underſtanding improv'd, you fairly ſet him free from the reſtraint of the one, and the drudgery of the other, by the priviledg'd diſtinction of a ſilk gown and velvet cap.

Sir WILLIAM.

And all theſe evils, you think, a city education would have prevented?

R. WEALTHY.

Doubtleſs.——Proverbs, proverbs, brother William, convey wholeſome inſtruction. Idleneſs is the root of all evil. Regular hours, conſtant employment, and good example, can't fail to form the mind.

Sir WILLIAM.

Why truly, brother, had you ſtuck to your old civic vices, hypocriſy, couzenage, and avarice, I don't know, whether I might not have committed George to your care; but, you cockneys, now beat us ſuburbians at our own weapons. What, old boy, times are chang'd ſince the date of thy indentures; when the ſleek, crop-ear'd 'prentice us'd to dangle after his miſtreſs, with the great Bible under his arm, to St. Bride's, on a Sunday; bring home the text, repeat the diviſions of the diſcourſe, dine at twelve, and regale, upon a gaudy day, with buns and beer at Iſlington or Mile-End.

R. WEALTHY.

Wonderfully facetious!

Sir WILLIAM.

Our modern lads are of a different metal. They have their gaming clubs in the garden, their little lodgings, the ſnug depoſitories of their ruſty ſwords, and occaſional bag-wigs; their horſes for the turf; ay, and their commiſſions of bankruptcy too, before they are well out of their time.

R. WEALTHY.

Infamous aſperſion?

Sir WILLIAM.

But the laſt meeting at Newmarket, lord Lofty receiv'd at the hazard-table, the identical note from the individual taylor to whom he had paid it but the day before, for a new ſet of liveries.

R. WEALTHY.

Invention!

Sir WILLIAM.

Theſe are anecdotes you will never meet with in your weekly travels from Cateaton-ſtreet to your boarded box in Clapham, brother.

R. WEALTHY.

And yet that boarded box, as your prodigal ſpendthrift proceeds, will ſoon be the only ſeat of the family.

Sir

Sir WILLIAM.

May be not. Who knows what a reformation our project may produce!

R. WEALTHY.

I do. None at all.

Sir WILLIAM.

Why ſo?

R. WEALTHY.

Becauſe your means are ill-proportion'd to their end. Were he my ſon, I would ſerve him——

Sir WILLIAM.

As you have done your daughter. Diſcard him. But conſider, I have but one.

R. WEALTHY.

That would weigh nothing with me: for, was Charlotte to ſet up a will of her own, and reject the man of my choice, ſhe muſt expect to ſhare the fate of her ſiſter. I conſider families as a ſmaller kind of kingdoms, and would have diſobedience in the one, as ſeverely puniſhed, as rebellion in the other. Both cut off from their reſpective ſocieties.

Sir WILLIAM.

Poor Lucy! But ſurely you begin to relent. Mayn't I intercede?

R. WEALTHY.

Lookee, brother, you know my mind. I will be abſolute. If I meddle with the management of your ſon, it is at your own requeſt;

queſt; but if directly or indirectly you interfere with my baniſhment of that willful, headſtrong, diſobedient huſſy, all ties between us are broke; and I ſhall no more remember you as a brother, than I do her as a child.

Sir WILLIAM.

I have done. But to return. You think there is a probability in my plan?

R. WEALTHY.

I ſhall attend the Iſſue.

Sir WILLIAM.

You will lend your aid, however?

R. WEALTHY.

We ſhall ſee how you go on.

Enter SERVANT.

SERVANT.

A letter, ſir.

Sir WILLIAM.

Oh, from Capias, my attorney. Who brought it?

SERVANT.

The perſon is without, ſir.

Sir WILLIAM.

Bid him wait. [*Reads.*] [*Exit* Serv.

Worthy Sir,

The bearer is the perſon I promis'd to procure. I thought it was proper for you to examine

examine him viva voce. So if you adminiſter a few interrogatories, you will find, by croſs queſtioning him, whether he is a competent perſon to proſecute the cauſe you wot of. I wiſh you a ſpeedy iſſue: and as there can be no default in your judgment, am of opinion it ſhould be carried into immediate execution. I am,

Worthy Sir, &c. TIMOTHY CAPIAS.

P. S. *The party's Name is* Samuel Shift. *He is an admirable mime, or mimic, and moſt delectable company; as we experience every Tueſday night at our club, the Magpye and Horſe-ſhoe, Fetter-lane.*

Very methodical indeed, Mr. Capias. John.

Enter SERVANT.

Bid the perſon, who brought this Letter, walk in. [*Exit* Serv.] Have you any curioſity, brother?

R. WEALTHY.

Not a jot. I muſt to the Change. In the evening you may find me in the counting-houſe, or at Jonathan's. [*Exit* R. Wealthy.

Sir WILLIAM.

You ſhall hear from me.

Enter SHIFT, *and* SERVANT.

Shut the door, John, and remember, I am not at home. [*Exit* Serv.] You came from Mr. Capias?

SHIFT.

SHIFT.

I did, ſir.

Sir WILLIAM.

Your name, I think, is Shift.

SHIFT.

It is, ſir.

Sir WILLIAM.

Did Mr. Capias drop any hint of my buſineſs with you?

SHIFT.

None. He only ſaid, with his ſpectacles on his noſe, and his hand upon his chin, Sir William Wealthy is a reſpectable perſonage, and my client; he wants to retain you in a certain affair, and will open the caſe, and give you your brief himſelf: if you adhere to his inſtructions, and carry your cauſe, he is generous, and will diſcharge your bill without taxation.

Sir WILLIAM.

Ha, ha, my friend Capias to a hair. Well ſir, this is no bad ſpecimen of your abilities. But ſee that the door is faſt. Now, ſir, you are to——

SHIFT.

A moment's pauſe, if you pleaſe. You muſt know, Sir William, I am a prodigious admirer of forms. Now Mr. Capias tells me, that it is always the rule, to adminiſter a retaining fee before you enter upon the merits.

Sir WILLIAM.

Oh, ſir, I beg your pardon.

SHIFT.

Not that I queſtion'd your generoſity; but forms you know——

Sir WILLIAM.

No apology, I beg. But as we are to have a cloſer connection, it may not be amiſs, by way of introduction, to underſtand one another a little. Pray, ſir, where was you born?

SHIFT.

At my father's.

Sir WILLIAM.

Hum.——And what was he?

SHIFT.

A gentleman.

Sir WILLIAM.

What was you bred?

SHIFT.

A gentleman.

Sir WILLIAM.

How do you live?

SHIFT.

Like a gentleman.

Sir WILLIAM.

Cou'd nothing induce you to unboſom yourſelf?

SHIFT.

Looke'e Sir William, there is a kind of ſomething in your countenance, a certain openneſs and generoſity, a je ne ſçai quoi in your man-

ner, that I will unlock: You ſhall ſee me all.

Sir WILLIAM.

You will oblige me.

SHIFT.

You muſt know then, that Fortune, which frequently delights to raiſe the nobleſt ſtructures from the ſimpleſt foundations; who from a taylor made a pope, from a gin-ſhop an empreſs, and many a prime miniſter, from nothing at all, has thought fit to raiſe me to my preſent height, from the humble employment of Light your Honour,——A link boy.

Sir WILLIAM.

A pleaſant fellow.——Who were your parents?

SHIFT.

I was produced, ſir, by a left-handed marriage, in the language of the news papers, between an illuſtrious lamp-lighter, and an eminent itinerant cat and dog butcher.—Cat's meat, and dog's meat.—I dare ſay, you have heard my mother, ſir. But as to this happy pair, I owe little beſides my being; I ſhall drop them where they dropt me, in the ſtreet.

Sir WILLIAM.

Proceed.

SHIFT.

My firſt knowledge of the world I owe to a ſchool, which has produced many a great man; the avenues of the Play-houſe: There, ſir, leaning on my extinguiſh'd link, I learn'd dexterity from

from pick-pockets, connivance from conſtables, politics and faſhions from footmen, and the art of making and breaking a promiſe, from their maſters. Here, ſirrah, light me a-croſs the kennel.——I hope your honour will remember poor Jack,——You ragged raſcal, I have no halfpence——I'll pay you the next time I ſee you.——But, lack-a-day, ſir, that time I ſaw as ſeldom as his tradeſmen.

Sir WILLIAM.

Very well.

SHIFT.

To theſe accompliſhments from without the Theatre, I muſt add one that I obtain'd within.

Sir WILLIAM.

How did you gain admittance there?

SHIFT.

My merit, ſir, that, like my link, threw a radiance round me.——A detachment from the head quarters here, took poſſeſſion in the ſummer, of a country corporation, where I did the honours of the barn, by ſweeping the ſtage, and clipping the candles. There my ſkill and addreſs was ſo conſpicuous, that it procur'd me the ſame office the enſuing winter, at Drury-Lane, where I acquir'd intrepidity; the crown of all my virtues.

Sir WILLIAM.

How did you obtain that?

SHIFT.

By my poſt. For I think, ſir, he that dares ſtand the ſhot of the gallery in lighting, ſnuffing, and ſweeping, the firſt night of a new play, may bid defiance to the pillory, with all its cuſtomary compliments.

Sir WILLIAM.

Some truth in that.

SHIFT.

But an unlucky crab-apple, apply'd to my right eye, by a patriot gingerbread baker from the Borough, who would not ſuffer three dancers from Switzerland, becauſe he hated the French, forced me to a precipitate retreat.

Sir WILLIAM.

Poor devil.

SHIFT.

Broglio and Contades have done the ſame. But as it happen'd, like a tennis-ball, I roſe higher from the rebound.

Sir WILLIAM.

How ſo?

SHIFT.

My misfortune, ſir, mov'd the compaſſion of one of our performers, a whimſical man, he took me into his ſervice. To him I owe, what, I believe, will make me uſeful to you.

Sir WILLIAM.

Explain.

SHIFT.

Why, ſir, my maſter was remarkably happy in an art, which however diſeſteem'd at preſent,

ſent, is, by Tully, reckon'd amongſt the perfections of an orator; Mimickry.

Sir WILLIAM.

Why you are deeply read, Mr. Shift.

SHIFT.

A ſmattering.——But as I was ſaying, ſir, nothing came amiſs to my maſter. Bypeds, or quadrupeds; rationals, or animals; from the clamour of the bar, to the cackle of the barn door; from the ſoporific twang of the tabernacle of Tottenham-Court, to the melodious bray of their long-ear'd brethren in Bunhill Fields; all were objects of his imitation, and my attention. In a word, ſir, for two whole years, under this profeſſor, I ſtudy'd and ſtarv'd, impoveriſh'd my body, and pamper'd my mind; till thinking myſelf pretty near equal to my maſter, I made him one of his own bows, and ſet up for myſelf.

Sir WILLIAM.

You have been ſucceſsful, I hope.

SHIFT.

Pretty well. I can't complain. My art, ſir, is a paſs-par-tout. I ſeldom want employment. Let's ſee how ſtand my engagements. [*pulls out a pocket-book.*] Hum,—hum,—Oh, Wedneſday at Mrs. Gammut's near Hanover-ſquare; there, there, I ſhall make a meal upon the Mingotti; for her ladyſhip is in the opera intereſt: but, however, I ſhall revenge her cauſe upon her rival Mattei. Sunday evening at Lady Suſtinuto's

nuto's concert. Thurſday I dine upon the actors, with ten templars, at the Mitre in Fleet-ſtreet. Friday I am to give the amorous parly of two intriguing cats in a gutter, with the diſturbing of a hen-rooſt, at Mr. Deputy Sugarſops, near the Monument. So, ſir, you ſee my hands are full. In ſhort, Sir William, there is not a buck or a turtle devoured within the bills of mortality, but there, I may, if I pleaſe, ſtick a napkin under my chin.

Sir WILLIAM.

I'm afraid, Mr. Shift, I muſt break in a little upon your engagements; but you ſhall be no loſer by the bargain.

SHIFT.

Command me.

Sir WILLIAM.

You can be ſecret as well as ſerviceable.

SHIFT.

Mute as a mackrel.

Sir WILLIAM.

Come hither then. If you betray me to my ſon.

SHIFT.

Scalp me.

Sir WILLIAM.

Enough.—You muſt know then, the hopes of our family, are, Mr. Shift, center'd in one boy.

SHIFT.

And, I warrant he is a hopeful one.

Sir

Sir WILLIAM.

No interruption I beg. George has been abroad theſe four years, and from his late behaviour, I have reaſon to believe, that had a certain event happened, which I am afraid he wiſhed,—my death.——

SHIFT.

Yes; that's natural enough.

Sir WILLIAM.

Nay, pray,—there wou'd ſoon be an end to an ancient and honourable family.

SHIFT.

Very melancholy indeed. But families, like beſoms, will wear to the ſtumps, and finally fret out, as you ſay.

Sir WILLIAM.

Pry'thee peace, for five minutes.

SHIFT.

I am tongue-ty'd.

Sir WILLIAM.

Now I have projected a ſcheme to prevent this calamity.

SHIFT.

Ay, I ſhou'd be glad to hear that.

Sir WILLIAM.

I am going to tell it you.

SHIFT.

Proceed.

Sir WILLIAM.

George, as I have contriv'd it, ſhall experience all the miſery of real ruin, without running the leaſt riſque.

SHIFT.

Ay, that will be a coup de maître.

Sir WILLIAM.

I have prevail'd upon his uncle, a wealthy citizen.

SHIFT.

I don't like a city plot.

Sir WILLIAM.

I tell thee it is my own.

SHIFT.

I beg pardon.

Sir WILLIAM.

My brother, I ſay, ſome time ſince, wrote him a circumſtantial account of my death; upon which, he is returned, in full expectation of ſucceeding to my eſtate.

SHIFT.

Immediately?

Sir WILLIAM.

No; when at age. In about three months.

SHIFT.

I underſtand you.

Sir WILLIAM.

Now, ſir, gueſſing into what hands my heedleſs boy would naturally fall, on his return, I have, in a feign'd character, aſſociated myſelf with

with a ſet of raſcals, who will ſpread every bait that can flatter folly, inflame extravagance, allure inexperience, or catch credulity. And when by their means, he thinks himſelf reduc'd to the laſt extremity; loſt even to the moſt diſtant hope——

SHIFT.

What then?

Sir WILLIAM.

Then will I ſtep in like his guardian-angel, and ſnatch him from perdition. If, mortify'd by miſery, he becomes conſcious of his errors, I have ſav'd my ſon; but if, on the other hand, gratitude can't bind, nor ruin reclaim him, I will caſt him out, as an alien to my blood, and truſt for the ſupport of my name and family to a remoter branch.

SHIFT.

Bravely reſolv'd. But what part am I to ſuſtain in this drama?

Sir WILLIAM.

Why George, you are to know, is already ſtript of what money he could command, by two ſharpers: but as I never truſt them out of my ſight, they can't deceive me.

SHIFT.

Out of your ſight!

Sir WILLIAM.

Why, I tell thee, I am one of the Knot: an adept in their ſcience, can ſlip, ſhuffle, cog, or cut with the beſt of 'em.

SHIFT.

How do you eſcape your ſon's notice?

Sir WILLIAM.

His firm perſuaſion of my death, with the extravagance of my diſguiſe.——Why, I wou'd engage to elude your penetration, when I am beau'd out for the baron. But of that by and by. He has recourſe, after his ill ſucceſs, to the cent. per cent. gentry, the uſurers, for a farther ſupply.

SHIFT.

Natural enough.

Sir WILLIAM.

Pray do you know,—I forgot his name,—a wrinkled old fellow, in a thread-bare coat? He ſits every morning, from twelve till two, in the left corner of Lloyd's coffee-houſe; and every evening, from five till eight, under the clock, at the Temple-exchange.

SHIFT.

What, little Transfer the broker?

Sir WILLIAM.

The ſame. Do you know him?

SHIFT.

Know him! Ay, rot him. It was but laſt Eaſter Tueſday, he had me turn'd out at a feaſt, in Leather-ſeller's Hall, for ſinging Room for Cuckolds, like a parrot; and vow'd it meant a reflection upon the whole body corporate.

Sir

Sir WILLIAM.

You have reaſon to remember him.

SHIFT.

Yes, yes, I recommended a minor to him myſelf, for the loan only of fifty pounds; and wou'd you believe it, as I hope to be ſav'd, we din'd, ſupp'd, and wetted five and thirty guineas upon tick, in meetings at the Croſs-keys, in order to ſettle the terms; and after all, the ſcoundrel would not lend us a ſtiver.

Sir WILLIAM.

Cou'd you perſonate him?

SHIFT.

Him! Oh, you ſhall ſee me ſhift into his ſhamble in a minute: and, with a wither'd face, a bit of a purple noſe, a cautionary ſtammer, and a ſleek ſilver head, I would undertake to deceive even his banker. But to ſpeak the truth, I have a friend that can do this inimitably well. Have not you ſomething of more conſequence for me?

Sir WILLIAM.

I have. Cou'd not you, maſter Shift, aſſume another ſhape? You have attended auctions.

SHIFT.

Auctions! a conſtant puff. Deep in the myſtery; a profeſſed connoiſſeur, from a niger

to a nautilus, from the Apollo Belvidere to a butterfly.

Sir WILLIAM.

One of theſe inſinuating, oily orators, I will get you to perſonate: for we muſt have the plate and jewels in our poſſeſſion, or they will ſoon fall into other hands.

SHIFT.

I will do it.

Sir WILLIAM.

Within I'll give you farther inſtructions.

SHIFT.

I'll follow you.

Sir WILLIAM. *Going, returns.*

You will want materials.

SHIFT.

Oh, my dreſs I can be furniſh'd with in five minutes. [*Exit* ſir Wil.] A whimſical old blade, this. I ſhall laugh if this ſcheme miſcarries. I have a ſtrange mind to lend it a lift—never had a greater—Pho, a damn'd unnatural connection this of mine!——What have I to do with fathers and guardians! a parcel of preaching, prudent, careful, curmudgeonly—dead to pleaſures themſelves, and the blaſters of it in others——Mere dogs in a manger—No, no, I'll veer, tack about, open my budget to the boy, and join in a counter plot. But hold, hold, friend Stephen, ſee firſt how the land

land lies. Who knows whether this Germaniz'd genius has parts to comprehend, or ſpirit to reward thy merit. There's danger in that, ay, marry is there. 'Egad before I ſhift the helm, I'll firſt examine the coaſt; and then if there be but a bold ſhore and a good bottom, have a care, old Square Toes, you will meet with your match. [*Exit.*

Enter Sir GEORGE, LOADER, *and Servant.*

Sir GEORGE.

Let the martin pannels for the vis a vis be carried to Long-Acre, and the pye-balls ſent to Hall's to be bitted——You will give me leave to be in your debt till the evening, Mr. Loader. I have but juſt enough left to diſcharge the baron; and we muſt, you know, be punctual with him, for the credit of the country.

LOADER.

Fire him, a ſnub-nos'd ſon of a bitch. Levant me, but he got enough laſt night to purchaſe a principality amongſt his countrymen, the High-dutchians and Huſſarians.

Sir GEORGE.

You had your ſhare, Mr. Loader.

LOADER.

Who, I! Lurch me at four, but I was mark'd to the top of your trick, by the baron, my

my dear. What, I am no cinque and quater man. Come, ſhall we have a dip in the hiſtory of the Four Kings, this morning?

Sir GEORGE.

Rather too early. Beſides, it is the rule abroad, never to engage a-freſh, till our old ſcores are diſcharg'd.

LOADER.

Capot me, but thoſe lads abroad are pretty fellows, let 'em ſay what they will. Here, ſir, they will vowel you, from father to ſon, to the twentieth generation. They wou'd as ſoon now-a-days, pay a tradeſman's bill, as a play debt. All ſenſe of honour is gone, not a ſtiver ſtirring. They cou'd as ſoon raiſe the dead as two pounds two; nick me, but I have a great mind to tie up, and ruin the raſcals—What, has Transfer been here this morning?

Enter DICK.

Sir GEORGE.

Any body here this morning, Dick?

DICK.

No body, your honour.

LOADER.

Repique the Raſcal. He promis'd to be here before me.

DICK.

I beg your honour's pardon. Mrs. Cole, from the Piazza, was here, between ſeven and eight.

Sir GEORGE.

An early hour for a lady of her calling.

DICK.

Mercy on me! The poor gentlewoman is mortally altered ſince we us'd to lodge there, in our jaunts from Oxford; wrapt up in flannels; all over the rheumatiſe.

LOADER.

Ay, ay, old Moll is at her laſt ſtake.

DICK.

She bad me ſay, ſhe juſt ſtopt in her way to the tabernacle; after the exhortation, ſhe ſays, ſhe'll call again.

Sir GEORGE.

Exhortation! Oh, I recollect. Well, whilſt they only make proſelytes from that profeſſion, they are heartily welcome to them. She does not mean to make me a convert?

DICK.

I believe ſhe has ſome ſuch deſign upon me; for ſhe offer'd me a book of hymns, a ſhilling, and a dram, to go along with her.

Sir GEORGE.

No bad ſcheme, Dick. Thou haſt a fine, ſober, pſalm-ſinging countenance; and when thou haſt been ſome time in their trammels, may'ſt make as able a teacher as the beſt of 'em.

DICK.

Laud, ſir, I want learning.

Sir GEORGE.

Oh, the ſpirit, the ſpirit will ſupply all that Dick, never fear.

Enter ſir WILLIAM, *as a German baron.*

My dear baron, what news from the Hay-market? What ſays the Florenza? Does ſhe yield? Shall I be happy? Say yes, and command my fortune.

Sir WILLIAM.

I was never did ſee ſo fine a Woman ſince I was leave Hamburgh; dere was all de colour, all red and white, dat was quite natural; point d'artifice. Then ſhe was dance and ſing——I vow to heaven, I was never ſee de like.

Sir GEORGE.

But how did ſhe receive my embaſſy? What hopes?

Sir

Sir WILLIAM.

Why dere was monſieur le chevalier, when I firſt enter, dree or four damn'd queer people; ah, ah, dought I, by gad I gueſs your buſineſs. Dere was one fat big woman's, dat I know long time: le valet de chambre was tell me dat ſhe came from a grand merchand; ha, ha, dought I, by your leave, ſtick to your ſhop; or, if you muſt have de pretty girl, dere is de play-hous, dat do very well for you; but for de opera, pardonnez, by gar dat is meat for your maſter.

Sir GEORGE.

Inſolent mechanic!—but ſhe deſpis'd him.

Sir WILLIAM.

Ah, may foy, he is damn'd rich, has beaucoup de guineas; but after de fat woman was go, I was tell the ſignora, madam, der is one certain chevalier of dis country, who has travell'd, ſee de world, bien fait, well made, beaucoup d'Eſprit, a great deal of monies, who beg, by gar, to have de honour to throw himſelf at your feet.

Sir GEORGE.

Well, well, baron.

Sir WILLIAM.

She aſka your name; as ſoon as I tell her, aha, by gar, dans an inſtant, ſhe melt like de lomp of ſugar: ſhe run to her bureau, and, in de minute, return wid de paper.

Sir GEORGE.

Give it me. *Reads.*

Les preliminaires d'une traité entre le chevalier Wealthy, and la ſignora Diamenti.

A bagatelle, a trifle: She ſhall have it.

LOADER.

Harkee, knight, what is all that there outlandiſh ſtuff?

Sir GEORGE.

Read, read. The eloquence of angels, my dear baron.

LOADER.

Slam me, but the man's mad! I don't underſtand their Gibberiſh —— What is it in Engliſh?

Sir GEORGE.

The preliminaries of a ſubſidiary treaty, between ſir G. Wealthy, and ſignora Florenza; That the ſaid ſignora will reſign the poſſeſſion of her perſon to the ſaid ſir George, on the payment of three hundred guineas monthly, for equipage, table, domeſtics, dreſs, dogs, and diamonds; her debts to be duly diſcharged, and a note advanced of five hundred, by way of entrance.

LOADER.

Zounds, what a cormorant! She muſt be deviliſh handſome.

Sir

Sir GEORGE.

I am told ſo.

LOADER.

Told ſo! why did you never ſee her?

Sir GEORGE.

No; and poſſibly never may, but from my box at the opera.

LOADER.

Hey-day. Why what the devil——

Sir GEORGE.

Ha, ha, you ſtare, I don't wonder at it. This is an elegant refinement, unknown to the groſs voluptuaries of this part of the world. This is, Mr. Loader, what may be called a debt to your dignity: for an opera girl is as eſſential a piece of equipage for a man of faſhion, as his coach.

LOADER.

The devil.

Sir GEORGE.

'Tis for the vulgar only to enjoy what they poſſeſs: the diſtinction of ranks and conditions are, to have hounds, and never hunt; cooks, and dine in taverns; houſes, you never inhabit; miſtreſſes, you never enjoy——

LOADER.

And debts you never pay. Egad, I am not ſurpriz'd at it; if this be your trade, no wonder that you want money for neceſſaries, when you give ſuch a damn'd deal for nothing at all.

Enter SERVANT.

SERVANT.

Mrs. Cole, to wait upon your honour.

Sir GEORGE.

My dear baron, run, diſpatch my affair, conclude my treaty, and thank her for the very reaſonable conditions.

Sir WILLIAM.

I ſhall.

Sir GEORGE.

Mr. Loader, ſhall I trouble you to introduce the lady. She is, I think, your acquaintance.

LOADER.

Who, old Moll! Ay, ay, ſhe's your market woman. I wou'd not give ſix-pence for your ſignoras. One armful of good, wholeſome Britiſh beauty, is worth a ſhip-load of their trapſing, tawdry trollops. But hark'ee, baron, how much for the table? Why ſhe muſt have a deviliſh large family, or a monſtrous ſtomach.

Sir WILLIAM.

Ay, ay, dere is her moder, la complaiſante to walk in de park, and to go to de play; two broders, deux valets, dree Spaniſh lap-dogs, and de monkey.

LOADER.

Strip me, if I wou'd ſet five ſhillings againſt the whole gang. May my partner renounce, with

with the game in his hand, if I were you, knight, if I would not—— [*Ex.* Bar.

Sir GEORGE.

But the lady waits. [*Ex.* Load.] A ſtrange fellow this. What a whimſical jargon he talks. Not an idea abſtracted from play. To ſay truth, I am ſincerely ſick of my acquaintance: But, however, I have the firſt people in the kingdom to keep me in countenance. Death and the dice level all diſtinctions.

Enter Mrs. COLE, *ſupported by* LOADER *and* DICK.

Mrs. COLE.

Gently, gently, good Mr. Loader.

LOADER.

Come along, old Moll. Why, you jade, you look as roſy this morning, I muſt have a ſmack at your muns. Here, taſte her, ſhe is as good as old hock to get you a ſtomach.

Mrs. COLE.

Fye, Mr. Loader, I thought you had forgot me.

LOADER.

I forget you! I would as ſoon forget what is trumps.

Mrs. COLE.

Softly, ſoftly, young man. There, there, mighty well. And how does your honour do? I han't

I han't ſeen your honour, I can't tell the——Oh, mercy on me, there's a twinge——

Sir GEORGE.

What is the matter, Mrs. Cole!

Mrs. COLE.

My old diſorder, the rheumatiſe; I han't been able to get a wink of——Oh law, what, you have been in town theſe two days.

Sir GEORGE.

Since Wedneſday.

Mrs. COLE.

And never once call'd upon old Cole. No, no, I am worn out, thrown by and forgotten, like a tatter'd garment, as Mr. Squintum ſays. Oh, he is a dear man! But for him I had been a loſt ſheep; never known the comforts of the new birth; no,——There's your old friend, Kitty Carrot, at home ſtill. What, ſhall we ſee you this evening! I have kept the green room for you ever ſince I heard you were in town.

LOADER.

What, ſhall we take a ſnap at old Moll's. Hey, beldam, have you a good batch of Burgundy abroach?

Mrs. COLE.

Bright as a ruby; and for flavour! You know the colonel——He and Jenny Cummins drank three flaſks, hand to fiſt, laſt night.

LOADER.

LOADER.

What, and bilk thee of thy ſhare?

Mrs. COLE.

Ah, don't mention it, Mr. Loader. No, that's all over with me. The time has been, when I could have earn'd thirty ſhillings a day by my own dry drinking, and the next morning was neither ſick nor ſorry: But now, O laud, a thimbleful turns me topſy turvey.

LOADER.

Poor old girl!

Mrs. COLE.

Ay, I have done with theſe idle vanities; my thoughts are fix'd upon a better place. What, I ſuppoſe, Mr. Loader, you will be for your old friend the black-ey'd girl, from Roſemary-Lane. Ha, ha. Well, 'tis a merry little tit. A thouſand pities ſhe's ſuch a reprobate!——But ſhe'll mend; her time is not come: all ſhall have their call, as Mr. Squintum ſays, ſooner or later; regeneration is not the work of a day. No, no, no.——Oh!

Sir GEORGE.

Not worſe, I hope.

Mrs. COLE.

Rack, rack, gnaw, gnaw, never eaſy, a bed or up, all's one. Pray, honeſt friend, have you any clary, or mint water in the houſe?

DICK.

A caſe of French drams.

Mrs. COLE.

Mrs. COLE.

Heaven defend me! I would not touch a dram for the world.

Sir GEORGE.

They are but cordials, Mrs. Cole. Fetch 'em, you blockhead. [*Ex.* Dick.

Mrs. COLE.

Ay, I am a going; a waſting and a waſting, Sir George. What will become of the houſe when I am gone, heaven knows.—No.—When people are miſt, then they are mourn'd. Sixteen years have I liv'd in the garden, comfortably and creditably; and, tho' I ſay it, could have got bail any hour of the day: Reputable tradeſmen, Sir George, neighbours, Mr. Loader knows; no knock me down doings in my houſe. A ſet of regular, ſedate, ſober cuſtomers. No rioters. Sixteen did I ſay—Ay, eighteen years I have paid ſcot and lot in the pariſh of St. Paul's, and during the whole time, no body have ſaid, Mrs. Cole, why do you ſo? Unleſs twice that I was before Sir Thomas De Val, and three times in the round-houſe.

Sir GEORGE.

Nay, don't weep, Mrs. Cole.

LOADER.

May I loſe deal, with an honour at bottom, if old Moll does not bring tears into my eyes.

Mrs. COLE.

However, it is a comfort after all, to think one has paſt thro' the world with credit and cha-

character. Ay, a good name, as Mr. Squintum ſays, is better than a gallipot of ointment.

Enter DICK, *with a Dram.*

LOADER.

Come, haſte, Dick, haſte; ſorrow is dry. Here, Moll, ſhall I fill thee a bumper?

Mrs. COLE.

Hold, hold, Mr. Loader. Heaven help you; I could as ſoon ſwallow the Thames. Only a ſip, to keep the gout out of my ſtomach.

LOADER.

Why then, here's to thee.—Levant me, but it is ſupernaculum.——Speak when you have enough.

Mrs. COLE.

I won't trouble you for the glaſs; my hands do ſo tremble and ſhake, I ſhall but ſpill the good creature.

LOADER.

Well pull'd. But now to buſineſs. Pr'ythee, Moll, did not I ſee a tight young wench in a linnen gown, knock at your door this morning?

Mrs. COLE.

Ay; a young thing from the country.

LOADER.

Could we not get a peep at her this evening?

Mrs. COLE.

Impoſſible! She is engag'd to Sir Timothy Totter. I have taken earneſt for her theſe three months.

LOADER.

Pho, what ſignifies ſuch a fellow as that. Tip him an old trader, and give her to the knight.

Mrs. COLE.

Tip him an old trader!——Mercy on us, where do you expect to go when you dye, Mr. Loader?

LOADER.

Crop me, but this Squintum has turn'd her brains.

Sir GEORGE.

Nay, Mr. Loader, I think the gentleman has wrought a moſt happy reformation.

Mrs. COLE.

Oh, it was a wonderful work. There had I been toſſing in a ſea of ſin, without rudder or compaſs. And had not the good gentleman piloted me into the harbour of grace, I muſt have ſtruck againſt the rocks of reprobation, and have been quite ſwallow'd up in the whirlpool of deſpair. He was the precious inſtrument of my ſpiritual ſprinkling.—But however, Sir George, if your mind be ſet upon a young country thing, to-morrow night I believe I can furniſh you.

LOADER.

As how?

Mrs. COLE.

I have advertis'd this morning, in the regiſter-office, for ſervants under ſeventeen; and ten to one but I light on ſomething that will do.

LOADER.

Pillory me, but it has a face.

Mrs. COLE.

Truly conſiſtently with my conſcience, I wou'd do any thing for your honour.

Sir GEORGE.

Right, Mrs. Cole, never loſe ſight of that monitor. But pray, how long has this heavenly change been wrought in you?

Mrs. COLE.

Ever ſince my laſt viſitation of the gout. Upon my firſt fit, ſeven years ago, I began to have my doubts, and my waverings; but I was loſt in a labyrinth, and no body to ſhew me the road. One time, I thought of dying a Roman, which is truly a comfortable communion enough for one of us: but it wou'd not do.

Sir GEORGE.

Why not?

Mrs. COLE.

I went one ſummer over to Boulogne to repent; and, wou'd you believe it, the bare-footed, bald-pate beggars, would not give me abſolution, without I quitted my buſineſs!—Did you ever hear of ſuch a ſet of ſcabby——Beſides, I cou'd not bear their barbarity. Wou'd you believe it, Mr. Loader, they lock up for their lives, in a nunnery, the prettieſt, ſweeteſt, tender, young things!——Oh, ſix of them, for a ſeaſon, wou'd finiſh my buſineſs here, and then I ſhou'd have nothing to do, but to think of hereafter.

LOADER.

Brand me, what a country!

Sir GEORGE.

Oh, ſcandalous!

Mrs. COLE.

O no, it would not do. So, in my laſt illneſs, I was wiſh'd to Mr. Squintum, who ſtepp'd in with his ſaving grace, got me with the new birth, and I became, as you ſee, regenerate, and another creature.

Enter DICK.

DICK.

Mr. Transfer, ſir, has ſent to know if your honour be at home.

Sir GEORGE.

Mrs. Cole, I am mortify'd to part with you. But Bus'neſs, you know——

Mrs. COLE.

True, ſir George. Mr. Loader, your arm ——Gently, oh, oh!

Sir GEORGE.

Wou'd you take another thimbleful, Mrs. Cole?

Mrs. COLE.

Not a drop—I ſhall ſee you this evening.

Sir GEORGE.

Depend upon me.

Mrs.

Mrs. COLE.

To-morrow I hope to ſuit you——We are to have, at the tabernacle, an occaſional hymn, with a thankſgiving ſermon for my recovery. After which, I ſhall call at the regiſter-office, and ſee what goods my advertiſement has brought in.

Sir GEORGE.

Extremely oblig'd to you, Mrs. Cole.

Mrs. COLE.

Or if that ſhou'd not do, I have a tid bit at home, will ſuit your ſtomach. Never bruſh'd by a beard. Well, heaven bleſs you——Softly, have a care, Mr. Loader——Richard, you may as well give me the bottle into the chair, for fear I ſhould be taken ill on the road. Gently —ſo, ſo. [*Exit Mrs.* Cole *and* Loader.

Sir GEORGE.

Dick, ſhew Mr. Transfer in——Ha, ha, what a hodge podge! How the jade has jumbled together the carnal and the ſpiritual; With what eaſe ſhe reconciles her new birth to her old calling!——No wonder theſe preachers have plenty of proſelytes, whilſt they have the addreſs, ſo comfortably to blend the hitherto jarring intereſts of the two worlds.

Enter LOADER.

LOADER.

Well, knight, I have hous'd her; but they want you within, ſir.

Sir GEORGE.

I'll go to them immediately.

ACT

ACT II.

Enter DICK, *introducing* TRANSFER.

DICK.

MY maſter will come to you preſently.

Enter Sir GEORGE.

Sir GEORGE.

Mr. Transfer, your ſervant.

TRANSFER.

Your Honour's very humble. I thought to have found Mr. Loader here.

Sir GEORGE.

He will return immediately. Well, Mr. Transfer—but take a chair—you have had a long walk. Mr. Loader, I preſume, open'd to you the urgency of my bus'neſs.

TRANSFER.

Ay, ay, the general cry, money, money! I don't know, for my part, where all the money is flown to. Formerly a note, with a tolerable endorſement, was as current as caſh.

If

If your uncle Richard now wou'd join in this ſecurity——

Sir GEORGE.

Impoſſible.

TRANSFER.

Ay, like enough. I wiſh you were of age.

Sir GEORGE.

So do I. But as that will be conſider'd in the premium——

TRANSFER.

True, true—I ſee you underſtand bus'neſs—And what ſum does your honour lack at preſent?

Sir GEORGE.

Lack!—How much have you brought?

TRANSFER.

Who, I?—Dear me, None.

Sir GEORGE.

Zounds, none!

TRANSFER.

Lack-a-day, none to be had, I think. All the morning have I been upon the hunt. There, Ephraim Barebones, the tallow-chandler, in Thames-ſtreet, us'd to be a never-failing chap; not a guinea to be got there. Then I totter'd away to Nebuchadnezzar Zebulon, in the Old Jewry, but it happen'd to be Saturday; and they never touch on the Sabbath, you know.

Sir

Sir GEORGE.

Why what the devil can I do?

TRANSFER.

Good me, I did not know your honour had been ſo preſs'd.

Sir GEORGE.

My Honour preſt! Yes, my Honour is not only preſt, but ruin'd, unleſs I can raiſe money to redeem it. That blockhead Loader, to depend upon this old doating——

TRANSFER.

Well, well, now I declare, I am quite ſorry to ſee your Honour in ſuch a taking.

Sir GEORGE.

Damn your ſorrow.

TRANSFER.

But come, don't be caſt down: Tho' money is not to be had, money's worth may, and that's the ſame thing.

Sir GEORGE.

How, dear Transfer?

TRANSFER.

Why I have, at my warehouſe in the city, ten caſks of whale-blubber, a large cargo of Dantzick dowlaſs, with a curious ſortment of Bermingham hafts, and Whitney blankets for exportation.

Sir GEORGE.

Hey!

TRANSFER.

And ſtay, ſtay, then, again, at my country-houſe, the bottom of Gray's-Inn-Lane, there's a hundred tun of fine old hay, only damag'd a little laſt winter, for want of thatching; with forty load of flint ſtones.

Sir GEORGE.

Well.

TRANSFER.

Your Honour may have all theſe for a reaſonable profit, and convert them into caſh.

Sir GEORGE.

Blubber and blankets! Why, you old raſcal, do you banter me?

TRANSFER.

Who I! O law, marry heaven forbid.

Sir GEORGE.

Get out of my—you ſtuttering ſcoundrel.

TRANSFER.

If your Honour wou'd but hear me.——

Sir GEORGE.

Troop, I ſay, unleſs you have a mind to go a ſhorter way than you came. [*Ex.* Tr. And yet there is ſomething ſo uncommonly ridiculous in his propoſal, that were my mind more at eaſe. [*Enter* LOADER.] So, ſir, you have recommended me to a fine fellow.

LOADER.

What's the matter?

Sir GEORGE.

He can't ſupply me with a ſhilling! And wants, beſides, to make me a dealer in dowlas.

LOADER.

Ay, and a very good commodity too. People that are upon ways and means, muſt not be nice, knight. A pretty piece of work you have made here! Thrown up the cards, with the game in your hands.

Sir GEORGE.

Why, prythee, of what uſe wou'd his——

LOADER.

Uſe! of every uſe. Procure you the ſpankers, my boy. I have a broker, that in a twinkling, ſhall take off your bargain.

Sir GEORGE.

Indeed!

LOADER.

Indeed! Ay, indeed. You ſit down to hazard, and not know the chances! I'll call him back.—Holo, Transfer,—A pretty, little, buſy, buſtling—You may travel miles, before you will meet with his match. If there is one pound in the city, he will get it. He creeps, like a ferret, into their bags, and makes the yellow boys bolt again.

Enter

Enter TRANSFER.

Come hither, little Transfer; what, man, our Minor was a little too haſty; He did not underſtand Trap; knows nothing of the game, my dear.

TRANSFER.

What I ſaid, was to ſerve Sir George; as he ſeem'd——

LOADER.

I told him ſo; Well, well, we will take thy commodities, were they as many more. But try, pr'ythee, if thou cou'dſt not procure us ſome of the ready, for preſent ſpending.

TRANSFER.

Let me conſider.

LOADER.

Ay, do, come: ſhuffle thy brains; never fear the baronet. To let a lord of lands want ſhiners; 'tis a ſhame.

TRANSFER.

I do recollect, in this quarter of the town, an old friend, that us'd to do things in this way.

LOADER.

Who?

TRANSFER.

Statute, the ſcrivener.

LOADER.

Slam me, but he has nick'd the chance.

TRANSFER.

A hard man, maſter Loader.

Sir GEORGE.

No matter.

TRANSFER.

His demands are exorbitant.

Sir GEORGE.

That is no fault of ours.

LOADER.

Well ſaid, knight.

TRANSFER.

But to ſave time, I had better mention his terms.

LOADER.

Unneceſſary.

TRANSFER.

Five per cent. legal intereſt.

Sir GEORGE.

He ſhall have it.

TRANSFER.

Ten, the præmium.

Sir GEORGE.

No more Words.

TRANSFER.

Then, as you are not of age, five more for enſuring your life.

LOADER.

We will give it.

TRANS-

TRANSFER.

As for what he will demand for the riſque—

Sir GEORGE.

He ſhall be ſatisfy'd.

TRANSFER.

You pay the attorney.

Sir GEORGE.

Amply, amply, Loader, diſpatch him.

LOADER.

There, there, little Transfer; now every thing is ſettled. All terms ſhall be comply'd with, reaſonable or unreaſonable. What, our principal is a man of honour. [*Ex.* Tr.] Hey, my knight, this is doing buſineſs. This Pinch is a ſure card.

Re-enter TRANSFER.

TRANSFER.

I had forgot one thing. I am not the principal; you pay the brokerage.

LOADER.

Ay, ay; and a handſome preſent into the bargain, never fear.

TRANSFER.

Enough, enough.

LOADER.

Hark'ee, Transfer, we'll take the Birmingham hafts and Whitney wares.

TRANSFER.

They ſhall be forth coming.—You would not have the hay, with the flints!

LOADER.

Every pebble of 'em. The magiſtrates of the Baronets Burrough, are infirm and gouty. He ſhall deal them as new pavement. [*Ex.* Tr.] So, that's ſettled. I believe, knight, I can lend you a helping hand as to the laſt article. I know ſome traders that will truck: fellows with finery. Not commodities of ſuch clumſey conveyance as old Transfer's.

Sir GEORGE.

You are obliging.

LOADER.

I'll do it boy. And get you, into the bargain, a bonny auctioneer, that ſhall diſpoſe of 'em all in a crack. [*Exeunt.*

Enter DICK.

DICK.

Your uncle, ſir, has been waiting ſome time.

Sir GEORGE.

He comes in a lucky hour. Shew him in. [*Ex.* Dick.] Now for a lecture. My ſituation ſha'n't ſink my ſpirits however. Here comes the muſty trader, running over with remonſtrances. I muſt banter the cit,

Enter RICHARD WEALTHY.

R. WEALTHY.

So, ſir, what, I ſuppoſe, this is a ſpice of your foreign breeding, to let your uncle kick his

his heels in your hall, whilſt your preſence chamber is crowded with pimps, bawds, and gameſters.

Sir GEORGE.

Oh, a proof of my reſpect, dear nuncle. Wou'd it have been decent now, nuncle, to have introduced you into ſuch company?

R. WEALTHY.

Wonderfully conſiderate! Well, young man, and what do you think will be the end of all this! Here, I have received by the laſt mail, a quire of your draughts from abroad. I ſee you were determin'd our neighbours ſhould taſte of your magnificence.

Sir GEORGE.

Yes, I think I did ſome credit to my country.

R. WEALTHY.

And how are all theſe to be paid?

Sir GEORGE.

That I ſubmit to you, dear nuncle.

R. WEALTHY.

From me!—Not a ſouſe to keep you from the Counter.

Sir GEORGE.

Why then let the ſcoundrels ſtay. It is their duty. I have other demands, debts of honour, which muſt be diſcharg'd.

R. WEALTHY.

Here's a diabolical diſtinction! Here's a proſtitution of words!—Honour! 'Sdeath, that a raſcal,

raſcal, who has pick'd your pocket, ſhall have his crime gilded with the moſt ſacred diſtinction, and his plunder punctually paid, whilſt the induſtrious mechanic, who miniſters to your very wants, ſhall have his debt delay'd and his demand treated as inſolent.

Sir GEORGE.

Oh, a truce to this threadbare trumpery, dear nuncle.

R. WEALTHY.

I confeſs my folly; but make yourſelf eaſy; you won't be troubled with many more of my viſits. I own I was weak enough to deſign a ſhort expoſtulation with you; but as we in the city know the true value of time, I ſhall take care not to ſquander away any more of it upon you.

Sir GEORGE.

A prudent reſolution.

R. WEALTHY.

One commiſſion, however, I can't diſpenſe with myſelf from executing.——It was agreed between your father and me, that as he had but one ſon and I one daughter——

Sir GEORGE.

Your gettings ſhou'd be added to his eſtate, and my couſin Margery and I ſquat down together in the comfortable ſtate of matrimony.

R. WEALTHY.

Puppy! Such was our intention. Now his laſt will claims this contract.

Sir GEORGE.

Sir GEORGE.

Diſpatch, dear nuncle.

R. WEALTHY.

Why then, in a word, ſee me here demand the execution.

Sir GEORGE.

What d'you mean? For me to marry Margery?

R. WEALTHY.

I do.

Sir GEORGE.

What, moi-me?

R. WEALTHY.

You, you.——Your anſwer, ay, or no?

Sir GEORGE.

Why then conciſely and briefly, without evaſion, equivocation, or farther circumlocution,——No.

R. WEALTHY.

I am glad of it.

Sir GEORGE.

So am I.

R. WEALTHY.

But pray, if it wou'd not be too great a favour, what objections can you have to my daughter? Not that I want to remove 'em, but merely out of curioſity. What objections?

Sir GEORGE.

None. I neither know her, have ſeen her; enquired after her, or ever intend it.

R. WEALTHY.

What, perhaps, I am the ſtumbling block.

Sir GEORGE.

You have hit it.

R. WEALTHY.

Ay, now we come to the point. Well, and pray———

Sir GEORGE.

Why it is not ſo much a diſlike to your perſon, tho' that is exceptionable enough, but your profeſſion, dear nuncle, is an inſuperable obſtacle.

R. WEALTHY.

Good lack! And what harm has that done, pray?

Sir GEORGE.

Done! So ſtain'd, polluted, and tainted the whole maſs of your blood, thrown ſuch a blot on your 'ſcutcheon, as ten regular ſucceſſions can hardly efface.

R. WEALTHY.

The duce!

Sir GEORGE.

And cou'd you now, conſiſtently with your duty as a faithful guardian, recommend my union with the daughter of a trader?

R. WEALTHY.

Why, indeed, I aſk pardon; I am afraid I did not weigh the matter as maturely as I ought.

Sir GEORGE.

Oh, a horrid, barbarous ſcheme?

R. WEAL-

R. WEALTHY.

But then I thought her having the honour to partake of the ſame fleſh and blood with yourſelf, might prove in ſome meaſure, a kind of Fuller's-earth, to ſcour out the dirty ſpots, contracted by commerce.

Sir GEORGE.

Impoſſible!

R. WEALTHY.

Beſides, here it has been the practice even of peers.

Sir GEORGE.

Don't mention the unnatural intercourſe! Thank heav'n, Mr. Richard Wealthy, my education has been in another country, where I have been too well inſtructed in the value of nobility, to think of intermixing it with the offspring of a Bourgois. Why, what apology cou'd I make to my children, for giving them ſuch a mother?

R. WEALTHY.

I did not think of that. Then I muſt deſpair, I am afraid.

Sir GEORGE.

I can afford but little hopes. Tho', upon recollection——Is the Griſſette pretty!

R. WEALTHY.

A parent may be partial. She is thought ſo.

Sir GEORGE.

Ah la jòlie petite Bourgoiſe; Poor girl, I ſincerely pity her. And I ſuppoſe, to procure

her emerſion from the merçantile mud, no conſideration wou'd be ſpar'd.

R. WEALTHY.

Why, to be ſure, for ſuch an honour, one wou'd ſtrain a point.

Sir GEORGE.

Why then, not totally to deſtroy our hopes, I do recollect an edict in favour of Britany; that when a man of diſtinction engages in commerce, his nobility is ſuffer'd to ſleep.

R. WEALTHY.

Indeed!

Sir GEORGE.

And upon his quitting the contagious connexion, he is permitted to reſume his rank.

R. WEALTHY.

That's fortunate.

Sir GEORGE.

So, nuncle Richard, if you will ſell out of the ſtocks, ſhut up your counting-houſe, and quit St. Mary Ax for Groſvenor-ſquare——

R. WEALTHY.

What then?

Sir GEORGE.

Why, when your rank has had time to rouſe itſelf, for I think your nobility, nuncle, has had a pretty long nap, if the girl's perſon is pleaſing, and the purchaſe-money is adequate to the honour, I may in time, be prevail'd upon to reſtore her to the right of her family.

R. WEAL-

R. WEALTHY.

Amazing condeſcenſion!

Sir GEORGE.

Good-nature is my foible. But, upon my ſoul, I wou'd not have gone ſo far for any body elſe.

R. WEALTHY.

I can contain no longer. Hear me, ſpend-thrift, prodigal, do you know, that in ten days your whole revenue won't purchaſe you a feather to adorn your empty head.

Sir GEORGE.

Hey day, what's the matter now?

R. WEALTHY.

And that you derive every acre of your boaſted patrimony from your great uncle, a ſoap-boiler!

Sir GEORGE.

Infamous aſperſion!

R. WEALTHY.

It was his bags, the fruits of his honeſt induſtry, that preſerv'd your lazy, beggarly nobility. His wealth repair'd your tottering hall, from the ruins of which, even the rats had run.

Sir GEORGE.

Better our name had periſh'd! inſupportable! ſoap-boiling, uncle!

R. WEALTHY.

Traduce a trader, in a country of commerce! It is treaſon againſt the community. And, for your

your puniſhment, I wou'd have you reſtor'd to the ſordid condition from whence we drew you. And like your predeceſſors, the Picts, ſtript, painted, and fed upon hips, haws, and black-berries.

Sir GEORGE.

A truce, dear haberdaſher.

R. WEALTHY.

One pleaſure I have, that to this goal you are upon the gallop; but have a care, the ſword hangs but by a thread. When next we meet, know me for the maſter of your fate.

[*Exit.*

Sir GEORGE.

Inſolent mechanic! But that this Burgois blood wou'd have ſoil'd my ſword——

Enter BARON *and* LOADER.

Sir WILLIAM.

What is de matter?

Sir GEORGE.

A fellow here, upon the credit of a little affinity, has dar'd to upbraid me with being ſprung from a ſoap-boiler.

Sir WILLIAM.

Vat, you from the boiler of ſoap!

Sir GEORGE.

Me.

Sir WILLIAM.

Aha, begar, dat is anoder ting—And harka you,

you, miſter mounſieur, ha—how dare a you have d'affrontry——

Sir GEORGE.

How!

Sir WILLIAM.

De impertinence to ſit down, play wid me?

Sir GEORGE.

What is this?

Sir WILLIAM.

A beggarly Bourgois vis-à-vis, a baron of twenty deſcents.

LOADER.

But baron——

Sir WILLIAM.

Bygar, I am almoſt aſham'd to win of ſuch a low, dirty—Give me my monies, and let a me never ſee your face.

LOADER.

Why, but baron, you miſtake this thing, I know the old buck this fellow prates about.

Sir WILLIAM.

May be.

LOADER.

Pigeon me, as true a gentleman as the grand ſignor. He was, indeed, a good-natur'd, obliging, friendly fellow; and being a great judge of ſoap, tar, and train-oil, he us'd to have it home to his houſe, and ſell it to his acquaintance for ready money, to ſerve them.

Sir

Sir WILLIAM.

Was dat all!

LOADER.

Upon my honour.

Sir WILLIAM.

Oh, dat, dat is anoder ting. Bygar I was afraid he was negotiant.

LOADER.

Nothing like it.

Enter DICK.

DICK.

A gentleman to enquire for Mr. Loader.

LOADER.

I come—A pretty ſon of a bitch, this baron! pimps for the man, picks his pocket, and then wants to kick him out of company, becauſe his uncle was an oil-man. [*Exit.*

Sir WILLIAM.

I beg pardon, chevalier, I was miſtake.

Sir GEORGE.

Oh, don't mention it; had the ſlam been fact, your behaviour was natural enough.

Enter LOADER.

LOADER.

Mr. Smirk, the auctioneer.

Sir GEORGE.

Shew him in, by all means. [*Exit* Load.

Sir

Sir WILLIAM.

You have affair.

Sir GEORGE.

If you'll walk into the next room, they will be finiſhed in five minutes.

Enter LOADER, *with* SHIFT, *as* SMIRK.

LOADER.

Here, maſter Smirk, this is the gentleman. Harkee, knight, did I not tell you, old Moll was your mark. Here ſhe has brought you a pretty piece of man's meat already; as ſweet as a noſegay, and as ripe as a cherry, you rogue. Diſpatch him, mean time we'll manage the girl. [*Exit.*

SMIRK.

You are the principal.

Sir GEORGE.

Even, ſo. I have, Mr. Smirk, ſome things of a conſiderable value, which I want to diſpoſe of immediately.

SMIRK.

You have.

Sir GEORGE.

Could you aſſiſt me?

SMIRK.

Doubtleſs.

Sir GEORGE.

But directly?

SMIRK.

We have an auction at twelve. I'll add your cargo to the catalogue.

Sir GEORGE.

Can that be done?

SMIRK.

Every day's practice: it is for the credit of the ſale. Laſt week, amongſt the valuable effects of a gentleman, going abroad, I ſold a choice collection of china, with a curious ſervice of plate; though the real party was never maſter of above two Delft diſhes, and a dozen of pewter, in all his life.

Sir GEORGE.

Very artificial. But this muſt be conceal'd.

SMIRK.

Bury'd here. Oh, many an aigrette and ſolitaire have I ſold, to diſcharge a lady's play-debt. But then we muſt know the parties; otherwiſe it might be knockt down to the huſband himſelf. Ha, ha——Hey ho!

Sir GEORGE.

True, upon my word, your profeſſion requires parts.

SMIRK.

No body's more. Did you ever hear, Sir George, what firſt brought me into the buſineſs?

Sir GEORGE.

Never.

SMIRK.

Quite an accident, as I may ſay. You muſt have known my predeceſſor, Mr. Prig, the greateſt man in the world, in his way, ay, or that ever was, or ever will be, quite a jewel of a man, he would touch you up a lot; there was no reſiſting him. He wou'd force you to bid, whether you wou'd or no. I ſhall never ſee his equal.

Sir GEORGE.

You are modeſt, Mr. Smirk.

SMIRK.

No, no, but his ſhadow. Far be it from me, to vie with that great man. But as I was ſaying, my predeceſſor, Mr. Prig, was to have a ſale as it might be on a Saturday. On Friday at noon, I ſhall never forget the day, he was ſuddenly ſeiz'd with a violent cholic. He ſent for me to his bed-ſide, ſqueez'd me by the hand; dear Smirk, ſaid he, what an accident! You know what is to-morrow; the greateſt ſhew this ſeaſon; prints, pictures, bronzes, butterflies, medals, and minionettes; all the world will be there; lady Dy Joſs, Mrs. Nankyn, the dutcheſs of Dupe, and every body at all: You ſee my ſtate, it will be impoſſible for me to mount. What can I do? It was not for me, you know, to adviſe that great man.

Sir GEORGE.

No, no.

SMIRK.

At laſt, looking wiſhfully at me, Smirk, ſays he, d'you love me?—Mr. Prig, can you doubt it?—I'll put it to the teſt, ſays he; ſupply my place to-morrow.—I, eager to ſhew my love, raſhly and rapidly replied, I will.

Sir GEORGE.

That was bold.

SMIRK.

Abſolute madneſs. But I had gone too far to recede. Then the point was, to prepare for the aweful occaſion. The firſt want that occurred to me, was a wig; but this was too material an article, to depend on my own judgement. I reſolv'd to conſult my friends. I told them the affair—you hear, gentlemen, what has happen'd; Mr. Prig, one of the greateſt men, in his way, the world ever ſaw, or ever will, quite a jewel of a man, taken with a violent fit of the cholic; to-morrow, the greateſt ſhew this ſeaſon; prints, pictures, bronzes, butterflies, medals, and minionettes; every body in the world to be there; lady Dy Joſs, Mrs. Nankyn, dutcheſs of Dupe, and all mankind; it being impoſſible he ſhould mount, I have conſented to ſell—They ſtar'd—It is true, gentlemen. Now I ſhould be glad to have your opinions as to a wig. They were divided: ſome recommended a tye, others a bag;

bag; one mention'd a bob, but was ſoon over-rul'd. Now, for my part, I own, I rather inclin'd to the bag; but to avoid the imputation of raſhneſs, I reſolv'd to take Mrs. Smirk's judgment, my wife, a dear good woman, fine in figure, high in taſte, a ſuperior genius, and knows old china like a Nabob.

Sir GEORGE.

What was her deciſion?

SMIRK.

I told her the caſe—My dear, you know what has happen'd. My good friend, Mr. Prig, the greateſt man in the world, in his way, that ever was, or ever will be, quite a jewel of a man, a violent fit of the cholic—the greateſt ſhew this ſeaſon, to-morrow, pictures, and every thing in the world; all the world will be there: now, as it is impoſſible he ſhould, I mount in his ſtead. You know the importance of a wig; I have aſk'd my friends—ſome recommended a tye, others a bag——what is your opinion? Why, to deal freely, Mr. Smirk, ſays ſhe, a tye for your round, regular, ſmiling face would be rather too formal, and a bag too boyiſh, deficient in dignity for the ſolemn occaſion; were I worthy to adviſe, you ſhould wear a ſomething between both. I'll be hang'd, if you don't mean a major. I jumpt at the hint, and a major it was.

Sir GEORGE.

So, that was fixt.

SMIRK.

SMIRK.

Finally. But next day, when I came to mount the roſtrum, then was the tryal. My limbs ſhook, and my tongue trembled. The firſt lot was a chamber-utenſil, in Chelſea china, of the pea-green pattern. It occaſioned a great laugh; but I got thro' it. Her Grace, indeed, gave me great encouragement. I overheard her whiſper to lady Dy, Upon my word, Mr. Smirk does it very well. Very well, indeed, Mr. Smirk, addreſſing herſelf to me. I made an acknowledging bow to her grace, as in duty bound. But one flower flounced involuntarily from me, that day, as I may ſay. I remember, Dr. Trifle call'd it enthuſiaſtic, and pronounc'd it a preſage of my future greatneſs.

Sir GEORGE.

What was that?

SMIRK.

Why, ſir, the lot was a guido; a ſingle figure, a marvellous fine performance; well preſerv'd, and highly finiſh'd. It ſtuck at five and forty; I, charm'd with the picture, and piqu'd at the people, A going for five and forty, no body more than five and forty?——Pray, ladies and gentlemen, look at this piece, quite fleſh and blood, and only wants a touch from the torch of Prometheus, to ſtart from the canvaſs and fall a bidding. A general plaudit enſu'd, I bow'd, and in three minutes knock'd it down at ſixty-three, ten.

Sir

Sir GEORGE.

That was a ſtroke at leaſt equal to your maſter.

SMIRK.

O dear me! You did not know the great man, alike in every thing. He had as much to ſay upon a ribbon as a Raphael. His manner too was inimitably fine. I remember, they took him off at the play-houſe, ſome time ago; pleaſant, but wrong. Public characters ſhou'd not be ſported with—They are ſacred—But we loſe time.

Sir GEORGE

Oh, in the lobby, on the table, you will find the particulars.

SMIRK.

We ſhall ſee you. There will be a world of company. I ſhall pleaſe you. But the great nicety of our art, is the eye. Mark how mine ſkims round the room. Some bidders are ſhy, and only advance with a nod; but I nail them. One, two, three, four, five. You will be ſurpris'd—Ha, ha, ha,—heigh ho. [*Exit.*

ACT

ACT III.

Enter ſir GEORGE *and* LOADER.

Sir GEORGE.

Moſt infernal run. Let's ſee, *(Pulls out a card.)* Loader a thouſand, the Baron two, Tally—Enough to beggar a banker. Every ſhilling of Transfer's ſupply exhauſted! Nor will even the ſale of my moveables prove ſufficient to diſcharge my debts. Death and the devil! In what a complication of calamities has a few days plung'd me! And no reſource?

LOADER.

Knight, here's old Moll come to wait on you; ſhe has brought the tid bit I ſpoke of. Shall I bid her ſend her in?

Sir GEORGE.

Pray do. [*Exit* Loader.

Enter Mrs. COLE *and* LUCY.

Mrs. COLE.

Come along, Lucy. You baſhful baggage. I thought I had ſilenc'd your ſcruples. Don't you remember what Mr. Squintum ſaid? A woman's not worth ſaving, that won't be guilty of a ſwinging ſin; for then they have matter to

to repent upon. Here, your honour, I leave her to your management. She is young, tender and timid; does not know what is for her own good: but your honour will ſoon teach her. I wou'd willingly ſtay, but I muſt not loſe the lecture. [*Exit.*

Sir GEORGE.

Upon my credit a fine figure. Awkard—Can't produce her publicly as mine; but ſhe will do for private amuſement——Will you be ſeated miſs?——Dumb! quite a picture! She too wants a touch of the Promethean torch—Will you be ſo kind, Ma'am, to walk from your frame and take a chair?—Come, pr'ythee, why ſo coy? Nay, I am not very adroit in the cuſtom of this country. I ſuppoſe I muſt conduct you——Come, miſs.

LUCY.

O, ſir.

Sir GEORGE.

Child.

LUCY.

If you have any humanity, ſpare me.

Sir GEORGE.

In tears! What can this mean? Artifice, A project to raiſe the price, I ſuppoſe. Lookee, my dear, you may ſave this piece of pathetic for another occaſion. It won't do with me: I am no novice——So, child, a truce to your tragedy, I beg.

LUCY.

Indeed you wrong me, ſir; indeed you do.

Sir GEORGE.

Wrong you! how came you here, and for what purpoſe?

LUCY.

A ſhameful one. I know it all, and yet believe me, ſir, I am innocent.

Sir GEORGE.

Oh, I don't queſtion that. Your pious patroneſs is a proof of your innocence.

LUCY.

What can I ſay to gain your credit? And yet, ſir, ſtrong as appearances are againſt me, by all that's holy, you ſee me here, a poor diſtreſt, involuntary victim.

Sir GEORGE.

Her ſtyle's above the common claſs; her tears are real.—Riſe, child.—How the poor creature trembles!

LUCY.

Say then I am ſafe.

Sir GEORGE.

Fear nothing.

LUCY.

May heaven reward you. I cannot.

Sir GEORGE.

Pr'ythee, child, collect yourſelf, and help me to unravel this myſtery. You came hither willingly. There was no force?

LUCY.

None.

Sir GEORGE.

You know Mrs. Cole?

LUCY.

LUCY.

Too well.

Sir GEORGE.

How came you then to truſt her!

LUCY.

Mine, ſir, is a tedious, melancholy tale.

Sir GEORGE.

And artleſs too?

LUCY.

As innocence.

Sir GEORGE.

Give it me.

LUCY.

It will tire you.

Sir GEORGE.

Not if it be true. Be juſt, and you will find me generous.

LUCY.

On that, ſir, I rely'd in venturing hither.

Sir GEORGE.

You did me juſtice. Truſt me with all your ſtory. If you deſerve, depend upon my protection.

LUCY.

Some months ago, ſir, I was conſider'd as the joint heireſs of a reſpectable, wealthy merchant; dear to my friends, happy in my proſpects, and my father's favourite.

Sir GEORGE.

His name.

LUCY.

There you muſt pardon me. Unkind and cruel tho' he has been to me, let me diſcharge the duty of a daughter, ſuffer in ſilence, nor bring reproach on him who gave me being.

Sir GEORGE.

I applaud your piety.

LUCY.

At this happy period, my father judging an addition of wealth muſt bring an increaſe of happineſs, reſolv'd to unite me with a man, ſordid in his mind, brutal in his manners, and riches his only recommendation. My refuſal of this ill-ſuited match, tho' mildly given, enflam'd my father's temper, naturally choleric, alienated his affections, and baniſh'd me his houſe, diſtreſt and deſtitute.

Sir GEORGE.

Wou'd no friend receive you?

LUCY.

Alas, how few are friends to the unfortunate! Beſides, I knew, ſir, ſuch a ſtep wou'd be conſider'd by my father, as an appeal from his juſtice. I therefore retir'd to a remote corner of the town, truſting, as my only advocate, to the tender calls of nature, in his cool, reflecting hours.

Sir GEORGE.

How came you to know this woman?

LUCY.

Accident plac'd me in a houſe, the miſtreſs of which profeſs'd the ſame principles with my infamous conductreſs. There, as enthuſiaſm

is the child of melancholy, I caught the infection. A conſtant attendance on their aſſemblies procur'd me the acquaintance of this woman, whoſe extraordinary zeal and devotion firſt drew my attention and confidence. I truſted her with my ſtory, and in return, receiv'd the warmeſt invitation to take the protection of her houſe. This I unfortunately accepted.

Sir GEORGE.

Unfortunately indeed!

LUCY.

By the decency of appearances, I was ſome time impoſed upon. But an accident, which you will excuſe my repeating, reveal'd all the horror of my ſituation. I will not trouble you with a recital of all the arts us'd to ſeduce me: Happily they hitherto have fail'd. But this morning I was acquainted with my deſtiny; and no other election left me, but immediate compliance, or a jail. In this deſperate condition, you cannot wonder, ſir, at my chooſing rather to rely on the generoſity of a gentleman, than the humanity of a creature inſenſible to pity, and void of every virtue.

Sir GEORGE.

The event ſhall juſtify your choice. You have my faith and honour for your ſecurity. For tho' I can't boaſt of my own goodneſs, yet I have an honeſt feeling for afflicted virtue; and, however unfaſhionable, a ſpirit that dares afford it protection. Give me your hand. As ſoon as I have diſpatch'd ſome preſſing buſineſs here,

here, I will lodge you in an aſylum, ſacred to the diſtreſſes of your ſex; where indigent beauty is guarded from temptations, and deluded innocence reſcu'd from infamy. [*Exeunt.*

Enter SHIFT.

Zooks, I have toil'd like a horſe; quite tir'd, by Jupiter. And what ſhall I get for my pains? The old fellow here, talks of making me eaſy for life. Eaſy! And what does he mean by eaſy? He'll make me an exciſe-man, I ſuppoſe, and ſo with an ink-horn at my button-hole and a taper ſwitch in my hand I ſhall run about gauging of beer-barrels. No, that will never do. This lad here is no fool. Foppiſh, indeed. He does not want parts, no, nor principles neither. I overheard his ſcene with the girl. I think I may truſt him. I have a great mind to venture it. It is a ſhame to have him dup'd by this old don. It muſt not be. I'll in, and unfold—Ha—Egad I have a thought too, which if my heir apparent can execute, I ſhall ſtill lye conceal'd, and, perhaps, be rewarded on both ſides.

I have it,—'tis engender'd, piping hot.

And now, Sir Knight, I'll match you with a plot. [*Exit.*

Enter Sir WILLIAM *and* RICH. WEALTHY.

R. WEALTHY.

Well, I ſuppoſe, by this time, you are ſatisfied what a ſcoundrel you have brought into the world, and are ready to finiſh your foolery.

Sir

Sir WILLIAM.

Got to the cataſtrophe, good brother.

R. WEALTHY.

Let us have it over then.

Sir WILLIAM.

I have already alarmed all his tradeſmen. I ſuppoſe we ſhall ſoon have him here, with a legion of bayliffs and conſtables.——Oh, you have my will about you.

R. WEALTHY.

Yes, yes.

Sir WILLIAM.

It is almoſt time to produce it, or read him the clauſe that relates to his rejecting your daughter. That will do his buſineſs. But they come. I muſt return to my character.

Enter SHIFT.

SHIFT.

Sir, ſir, we are all in the wrong box; our ſcheme is blown up; your ſon has detected Loader and Tally, and is playing the very devil within.

Sir WILLIAM.

Oh, the bunglers?

SHIFT.

Now for it, youngſter.

Enter Sir GEORGE, *driving in* LOADER *and another.*

Sir GEORGE.

Raſcals, robbers, that like the locuſt, mark the road you have taken, by the ruin and deſolation you leave behind you.

LOADER.

LOADER.

Sir George.

Sir GEORGE.

And can youth, however cautious, be guarded againſt ſuch deep-laid complicated villany? Where are the reſt of your diabolical crew? your auctioneer, uſurer, and——O ſir, are you here!——I am glad you have not eſcap'd us however.

Sir WILLIAM.

What de devil is de matter!

Sir GEORGE.

Your birth, which I believe an impoſition, preſerves you however, from the diſcipline thoſe rogues have receiv'd. A baron, a noble-man, a ſharper! O ſhame! It is enough to baniſh all confidence from the world. On whoſe faith can we rely, when thoſe, whoſe honour is held as ſacred as an oath, unmindful of their dignity, deſcend to rival pick-pockets in their infamous arts. What are theſe [*pulls out dice*] pretty implements, the fruits of your leiſure hours. They are dexterouſly done. You have a fine mechanical turn.—Dick, ſecure the door.

Mrs. COLE, *ſpeaking as entering.*

Mrs. COLE.

Here I am, at laſt. Well, and how is your honour, and the little gentlewoman.——Bleſs me, what is the matter here?

Sir

Sir GEORGE.

I am, Madam, treating your friends with a cold collation, and, you are opportunely come for your ſhare. The little gentlewoman is ſafe, and in much better hands than you deſigned her. Abominable hypocrite! Who, tottering under the load of irreverent age, and infamous diſeaſes, inflexibly proceeds in the practice of every vice, impiouſly proſtituting the moſt ſacred inſtitutions to the moſt infernal purpoſes.

Mrs. COLE.

I hope your Honour——

Sir GEORGE.

Take her away. As you have been ſingular in your penitence, you ought to be diſtinguiſh'd in your pennance. Which, I promiſe you, ſhall be moſt publickly and plentifully beſtow'd.

[*Exit* Cole.

Enter DICK.

DICK.

The conſtables, ſir.

Sir GEORGE.

Let them come in, that I may conſign theſe gentlemen to their care. [*To Sir* Will.] Your letters of nobility you will produce in a court of juſtice. Tho', if I read you right, you are one of thoſe indigent, itinerant nobles, of your own creation, which our reputation for hoſpitality draws hither in ſhoals, to the ſhame of our underſtanding, the impairing of our fortunes, and when you are truſted, the betraying of our deſigns. Officers, do your duty.

Sir WILLIAM.

Why, don't you know me?

Sir GEORGE.

Juſt as I gueſs'd. An impoſtor. He has recover'd the free uſe of his tongue already.

Sir WILLIAM.

Nay, but George.

Sir GEORGE.

Inſolent familiarity! away with him.

Sir WILLIAM.

Hold, hold, a moment. Brother Richard, ſet this matter to rights.

R. WEALTHY.

Don't you know him?

Sir GEORGE.

Know him! The very queſtion is an affront.

R. WEALTHY.

Nay, I don't wonder at it. 'Tis your father, you fool.

Sir GEORGE.

My father! Impoſſible!

Sir WILLIAM.

That may be, but 'tis true.

Sir GEORGE.

My father alive! Thus let me greet the bleſſing.

Sir WILLIAM.

Alive! Ay, and I believe I ſhan't be in a hurry to die again.

Sir GEORGE.

But, dear ſir, the report of your death—— and this diſguiſe——to what——

Sir

Sir WILLIAM.

Don't aſk any queſtions. Your uncle will tell you all. For my part, I am ſick of the ſcheme.

R. WEALTHY.

I told you what would come of your politics.

Sir WILLIAM.

You did ſo. But if it had not been for thoſe clumſey ſcoundrels, the plot was as good a plot ——O George, ſuch diſcoveries, I have to make. Within I'll unravel the whole.

Sir GEORGE.

Perhaps, ſir, I may match 'em.

SHIFT.

Sir. [*Pulls him by the ſleeve.*

Sir GEORGE.

Never fear. It is impoſſible, gentlemen, to determine your fate, till this matter is more fully explain'd. Till when, keep 'em in ſafe cuſtody.——Do you know them, ſir?

Sir WILLIAM.

Yes, but that's more than they did me. I can cancel your debts there, and, I believe, prevail on thoſe gentlemen to refund too.—— But you have been a ſad profligate young dog, George.

Sir GEORGE.

I can't boaſt of my goodneſs, ſir, but I think I could produce you a proof, that I am not ſo totally deſtitue of———

Sir WILLIAM.

Ay? Why then pr'ythee do.

Sir GEORGE.

I have, ſir, this day, reſiſted a temptation, that greater pretenders to morality might have yielded to. But I will truſt myſelf no longer, and muſt crave your Interpoſition and protection.

Sir WILLIAM.

To what?

Sir GEORGE.

I will attend you with the explanation in an inſtant. [*Exit.*

Sir WILLIAM.

Pr'ythee, Shift, what does he mean?

SHIFT.

I believe I can gueſs.

Sir WILLIAM.

Let us have it.

SHIFT.

I ſuppoſe the affair I overheard juſt now, a prodigious fine elegant girl, faith; that, diſcarded by her family, for refuſing to marry her grand-father, fell into the hands of the venerable lady you ſaw, who being the kind caterer for your ſon's amuſements, brought her hither for a purpoſe obvious enough. But the young gentleman, touch'd with her ſtory, truth and tears, was converted from the ſpoiler of her honour, to the protector of her innocence.

Sir WILLIAM.

Look'e there, brother, did not I tell you that George was not ſo bad at the bottom!

R. WEALTHY.

This does indeed attone for half the——But they are here. *Enter*

Enter ſir GEORGE *and* LUCY.

Sir GEORGE.

Fear nothing, madam, you may ſafely rely on the——

LUCY.

My father!

R. WEALTHY.

Lucy!

LUCY.

O, ſir, can you forgive your poor diſtreſt unhappy girl? You ſcarce can gueſs how hardly I've been us'd, ſince my baniſhment from your paternal roof. Want, pining want, anguiſh and ſhame, have been my conſtant partners.

Sir WILLIAM.

Brother!

Sir GEORGE.

Sir!

LUCY.

Father!

R. WEALTHY.

Riſe, child, 'tis I muſt aſk thee forgiveneſs. Can'ſt thou forget the woes I've made thee ſuffer? Come to my arms once more, thou darling of my age.—What miſchief had my raſhneſs nearly compleated. Nephew, I ſcarce can thank you as I ought, but——

Sir GEORGE.

I am richly paid, in being the happy inſtrument——Yet, might I urge a wiſh——

R. WEALTHY.

Name it.

Sir GEORGE.

That you would forgive my follies of to-day; and, as I have been providentially the occaſional guardian of your daughter's honour, that you would beſtow on me that right for life.

R. WEALTHY.

That muſt depend on Lucy; her will, not mine, ſhall now direct her choice——What ſays your father?

Sir WILLIAM.

Me! Oh, I'll ſhew you in an inſtant. Give me your hands. There, children, now, you are join'd, and the devil take him that wiſhes to part you.

Sir GEORGE.

I thank you for us both.

R. WEALTHY.

Happineſs attend you.

Sir WILLIAM.

Now, brother, I hope you will allow me to be a good plotter. All this was brought to bear by my means.

SHIFT.

With my aſſiſtance, I hope, you'll own, ſir.

Sir WILLIAM.

That's true, honeſt Shift, and thou ſhalt be richly rewarded; nay, George ſhall be your friend too. This Shift is an ingenious fellow, let me tell you, ſon.

Sir GEORGE.

I am no ſtranger to his abilities, ſir. But, if you pleaſe, we will retire. The various ſtruggles

ſtruggles of this fair ſufferer require the ſoothing ſoftneſs of a ſiſter's love. And now, ſir, I hope your fears for me are over; for had I not this motive to reſtrain my follies; yet I now know the town too well to be ever its bubble, and will take care to preſerve, at leaſt,

Some more eſtate, and principles, and wit,
Than brokers, bawds, and gameſters ſhall think fit.

SHIFT, *addreſſing himſelf to Sir* George.

And what becomes of your poor ſervant Shift?
Your father talks of lending me a lift——
A great man's promiſe, when his turn is ſerv'd!
Capons on promiſes, wou'd ſoon be ſtarv'd:
No, on myſelf alone, I'll now rely:
'Gad I've a thriving traffic in my eye——
Near the mad manſions of Moorfields I'll bawl;
Friends, fathers, mothers, ſiſters, ſons and all,
Shut up your ſhops, and liſten to my call.
With labor, toil, all ſecond means diſpenſe,
And live a rent-charge upon providence.
Prick up your ears; a ſtory now I'll tell,
Which once a widow, and her child befell,
I knew the mother, and her daughter well;
Poor, it is true, they were; but never wanted,
For whatſoe'er they aſk'd, was always granted:
One fatal day, the matron's truth was try'd,
She wanted meat and drink, and fairly cry'd.
[Child.] Mother, you cry! [Moth.] Oh, child, I've got no bread.
[Child.] What matters that? Why providence a'nt dead!

With

With reaſon good, this truth the child might ſay;
For there came in at noon, that very day,
Bread, greens, potatoes, and a leg of mutton,
A better ſure, a table ne'er was put on:
Ay, that might be, ye cry, with thoſe poor ſouls;
But we ne'er had a raſher for the coals.
And d'ye deſerve it? How d'ye ſpend your days:
In paſtimes, prodigality, and plays!
Let's go ſee Foote! ah, Foote's a precious limb!
Old-nick will ſoon a football make of him!
For foremoſt rows in ſide-boxes you ſhove,
Think you to meet with ſide-boxes above?
Where giggling girls, and powder'd fops may ſit,
No, you will all be cram'd into the pit,
And crowd the houſe for ſatan's benefit.
Oh, what you ſnivel; well, do ſo no more;
Drop, to attone, your money at the door,
And, if I pleaſe,——I'll give it to the poor.

FINIS.